

Knowing God (Part I)

Prison 04/14/2018

(I use the New American Standard Bible)

My part in our major theme for the weekend "Knowing God" is: How We Know GOD and are Known by GOD.

Let me start with a mixture of truths and principles about God's Word and rightly dividing the Word of Truth:

1. God's Word has no errors but is absolute truth. It is the only absolute truth in this world and in this life!
2. All of Scripture (that is original manuscripts) is God breathed (II Tim 3:16; II Pe 1:20-21, "But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.")
3. All Scripture is God's own specific revelation of Himself to man. To know God intimately, we must go to the Scriptures; learn and understand them; and seek after Him in and through His Holy Word (Christ being the Word of God made flesh) Joh 5:39 Jesus said, "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; ..."
4. When interpreting Scripture, Scripture will never contradict itself. Scripture always agrees with Scripture. If you interpret one verse of Scripture a certain way and there is another verse of Scripture elsewhere in God's Word that clearly teaches the opposite, then your understanding is wrong, or your understanding of the other Scripture is wrong; or both Scripture interpretations are wrong.
5. Always allow God's Word to say what it says and don't change the wording or the definition of words to agree with your own understanding and what you think is true. Don't impose upon God's Word what you think it should say to agree with your own ideas of who God is and what He is like. Accept Scripture for what it says!

God can speak for Himself and says what He means and means what He says.

6. Use Scripture to interpret Scripture. God's Word interprets itself.
7. Depend completely upon the Holy Spirit to understand God's Word! Jesus clearly said, Joh 16:13-15, "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, **He will guide you into all the truth**; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose it to you."

With that said and having searched God's Word using these very principles, please listen carefully and closely:

How we come to know God is totally and completely dependent upon being known by God. More specifically, we cannot know God and will not desire to know God unless we have been known by God in eternity past. I intend to explain this statement of truth by showing, from the progressive revelation of God's Holy Word given to us through history, that which God has revealed to us of Himself and how He relates to man and to His Elect. Please turn with me to Ephesians chapter 1 starting with verse 3. The "us" in the following verses are "the saints who are at Ephesus and who are faithful in Christ Jesus"; to whom the Apostle Paul is writing as explained in verse 1. This is God's truth and is applicable to all true believers, that is, those "who are faithful in Christ Jesus". Being faithful in and to Christ is evidence that a believer's faith is genuine and should give him confidence that he is one of God's chosen.

Eph 1:3-6,11, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as **He chose us in Him before the foundation of the**

world (that is, before He created this world. The Greek Word "chose" means "to pick or choose out for one's self". Thayer's Greek Lexicon also says, "of God choosing whom he judged fit to receive his favours and separated (them) from the rest of mankind to be peculiarly his own and to be attended continually by his gracious oversight". Before the foundation of the world is the time at which God the Father wrote the names of those He chose in the Lambs book of life. And for what purpose?) - "that they would be holy and blameless before Him." (That is, that they be conformed to the image of His Son Who is Holy and blameless.) "In love He predestined us (Using Thayer's Greek Lexicon, the word "predestined" means: "to predetermine, decide beforehand; in the NT of God decreeing from eternity" and I would like to add the word "past", that is "eternity past", because it was before creation when He chose us and predestined us) to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself", (Why did He choose us? It was) "according to the kind intention of His will" (In other words, God the Father, of His own free will and desire, graciously chose us, to have mercy upon us and make us His own possession.) (He did so), "to the praise of the glory of His grace (undeserved favor), which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved (that is in Christ). In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, ...". Now let's turn to Romans 8:29 and 30:

Rom 8:29-30, "For those whom He foreknew (the word "foreknew" means God knew them intimately before their existence; He set His Eternal Love upon them before creation; It means "to foreknow". The Greek word "foreknow" is made up of two Greek words: pro, meaning "beforehand" or "prior to", and ginosko which means, according to Thayer's Greek Lexicon, "to know, understand, perceive, have knowledge of ("prior to" their conception in their mother's womb or their coming into existence as a person); ginosko (also) is the Jewish idiom for sexual intercourse between a man and a woman" - referring

to the most intimate relationship of truly knowing one another in the deepest way possible), **He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son**, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;

Rom 8:30 and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

King David understood that God "foreknew" him before he was conceived in his mother's womb. He knew God had set His Eternal Love upon him and chose him before creation. Listen to David's language in Psalm 139:13-18, "For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb. I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth; Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Your book were all written the days that were ordained (predestined) for me, when as yet there was not one of them (David knew his name was written in the Lambs book of life). David continues, "How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How vast is the sum of them? If I should count them, they would outnumber the sand. When I awake, I am still with You."

David is speaking the language of Ephesians 1 and Romans 8 in this Psalm 139. He understood and knew God's choosing him for His own.

There is so much to explain from the whole of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation about these truth's, but we don't have time, so I must move on without giving the much needed supportive Scriptures and only hit a few of the high points. To know God requires we know and understand ourselves as our Sovereign and Holy God sees us and knows us. We know from Genesis chapter 1-3 that God created man in His own image. Part of that image was being created sinless, holy and righteous. Without sin and before sin man had an intimate relationship with God,

talking to Him face to face and seeing Him as He is. After Adam and Eve willfully committed their one act of disobedience, God separated them from Himself and separated Himself from them. Sin breaks our relationship with God because He will not allow sin in His presence. We see in the Genesis account that because God's nature is Holy and just He must react against sin with wrath and judgment upon those who sin. Due to Adam and Eve's one act of disobedience - just eating a fruit off one tree God commanded them not to eat from - God cursed Satan, Man and all His creation. Because of only one act of disobedience we now have sicknesses, diseases, disasters, wars, harmful and destructive acts of evil caused by sinful living, pain, grief, suffering, sorrow and the list can go on and on finally culminating in death. **One sin** is exceedingly sinful in God's eyes and will bring His wrath. We were designed for holy and righteous living. Living in sin destroys our lives and brings God's wrath and judgment (curses) while righteous and holy living brings God's favor and blessings. The Scriptures teach:

Rom 5:12 "Therefore, just as through one man (Adam) sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned-- ..." And,

Rom 3:10-12, "... as it is written, "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE; THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD; ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE."

We all, having descended from Adam, have hearts of stone, hardened towards God, His Christ and the things of God, at birth. We will all die with hearts of stone if God chooses to withhold His mercy and grace from us. He has done no wrong and would still be just, righteous and sinless if He withheld His mercy and grace for we truly don't deserve them and should not be given them.

Let's now look at God's dealings with His Chosen physical, blood lineage, Nation of Israel, through the Old Covenant: In

Deu 28:1 & 2, Moses speaks to the chosen Nation of Israel, "Now it shall be, if you diligently obey the LORD your God, being careful to do all His commandments which I command you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth."

Deu 28:2 "All these blessings will come upon you and overtake you if you obey the LORD your God: ..."

Then Moses listed the numerous blessings if they kept all the law of God. Moses said to the physical Nation of Israel born from Abraham through blood lineage:

Deu 28:15 "But it shall come about, if you do not obey the LORD your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes with which I charge you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you: ..."

And Moses listed all the curses which would come upon the chosen Nation of Israel for disobedience to God. The Old Covenant that God made with the Nation of Israel was simple. Keep all the law and live. Disobey the law and experience the wrath and judgment of God through a multitude of curses.

Due to time, I cannot cover all of Scripture showing the outcome concerning the Nation of Israel. So, I will try to show briefly, using a few Scriptures, what the whole of Scripture teaches about the Old Covenant and New Covenant relationship to the chosen Nation of Israel as compared to the "Israel of God", the spiritual Nation of Israel: Speaking of the blood descendent Nation of Israel, let's read from

Heb 8:7-10, "For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second. For finding fault with them, He says, "BEHOLD, DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS THE LORD, WHEN I WILL EFFECT A NEW COVENANT WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH; NOT LIKE THE COVENANT WHICH I MADE WITH THEIR FATHERS ON THE DAY WHEN I TOOK THEM BY THE HAND TO LEAD THEM

OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT; FOR THEY DID NOT CONTINUE IN MY COVENANT, AND I DID NOT CARE FOR THEM, SAYS THE LORD."

Please turn to Romans 9:

Talking about God's choices of who would receive His mercy and grace:

Rom 9:6-8,11,15,16, "But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel; nor are they all children (God's Israel) because they are Abraham's descendants, but: 'THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED.' That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise (God's Chosen - Ephesians 1) are regarded as descendants."

Rom 9:11, "for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to His choice would stand (Ephesians 1), not because of works but because of Him who calls (Romans 8:29,30), ..."

Rom 9:15,16, "For He says to Moses, "I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I HAVE COMPASSION." So then it does not depend on the man who wills (not our choice) or the man who runs (nothing we can do to save ours, John 1:12,13), but on God who has mercy (we are totally dependent upon God choosing or not choosing to show us mercy)."

Rom 9:20,21, "On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use (His chosen) and another for common use (those He allows to live according to their own free will to do what they desire with their own lives, justly deserving the consequences of their own choices)?" [God is Just and would be Just even if He chose to give His mercy to none; or gave NO MERCY to all, withdrawing His Grace from all and allowing all those born of Adam to live according to their own desires and choices having their own free wills to choose their own way and do what they desired.

Without God's Mercy and Grace, we would all die with stony hearts - hearts hardened, at conception (birth), toward God, His Christ and His Grace (Jer 17:9 "The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; Who can understand it?" Jer 13:23 "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Then you also can do good who are accustomed to doing evil." And, Romans 3:10-18; Matthew 15:18-20). We would love our sins (our fleshly desires) more than Him and willingly chose our sins rather than allowing Him to tell us how to live our own lives. It would be our willful choice to do so, thusly, justly deserving His wrath. Thank our Sovereign, Loving, Merciful God that He chose some within His Holy, Righteous, Sinless Being, "... according to the kind intention of His will ...", Ephesians 1:5b. He cannot err!!! The hearts of stone are replaced by a heart of flesh when we are born again (Ezekiel 36:26; Titus 3:3-7; John 3:6-7) by His merciful choice on the some that He chose before the foundation of the world!!!!]

Rom 11:1-7, "I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew (Romans 8:29-30, Chose before the foundation of the World and set His Eternal Love upon. Knows them intimately before conception in their mother's womb, Psalm 139:14-18). Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? 'Lord, THEY HAVE KILLED YOUR PROPHETS, THEY HAVE TORN DOWN YOUR ALTARS, AND I ALONE AM LEFT, AND THEY ARE SEEKING MY LIFE.' But what is the divine response to him? "I HAVE KEPT for Myself SEVEN THOUSAND MEN WHO HAVE NOT BOWED THE KNEE TO BAAL." In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice. But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace. [Grace is God's undeserved favor towards us giving to us the ability to do His will (Holy Spirit in us and a heart of flesh at our rebirth); and His continued mercies and steadfast love upon us (those whom He

chose before the Foundation of the World), every day (Romans 8), though we never deserve them.) What then? What Israel is seeking, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen (Ephesians 1, Romans 8, + many other Scriptures which are in agreement these) obtained it, and the rest were hardened; ...".

My time is up for teaching. Therefore, I cannot continue explaining these truths, so let me close even though there are many other things to say and should be said with these truths already given:

We need to have a mind and heart understanding of three truths and act on them if we sincerely desire to know God, His Mercy, Compassion, Forgiveness, Love and Grace; and, truly desire to spend eternity in His presence in heaven. We, you and I, must understand in our minds and hearts so that we feel and are convicted by the full weight of these truths:

1. God is Holy demanding perfect righteousness to know Him, not allowing one sin into His Heavenly Kingdom; therefore, demanding a genuine turning from all sin to escape His judgment and wrath.
2. We must, each one in particular, know in our mind and heart our sins, feeling the guilt and weight of our sins against and before our Holy God; and, know that His Eternal judgment and wrath is against us if we remain in them.
3. Hell, everlasting separation from God and Eternal damnation is a sober reality if I refuse to obey Christ's call and demand to repent and believe in Him, trusting Him alone for salvation and eternal life; or, God's mercy, compassion, forgiveness, peace, grace, eternal life, Christ's perfect righteousness to bring me into a relationship with Him, Christ's life in me, and much more, and **Heaven is a blessed reality if I obey Christ's call and demand upon me to turn from all my sins and put total trust in Him alone for salvation and eternal life.** (If He chose me before creation

and wrote my name in His Lamb's book of Life before creation in eternity past, then I will Obey Christ's call and follow Him - only because of His Mercy and Grace He gives to me at the moment He calls me. We must be known by Him in eternity past before we can know Him [Ephesians 1]; for we love Him because He FIRST loved us!!!)

Isa 14:24,27, "The LORD of hosts has sworn saying, 'Surely, just as I have intended so it has happened, and just as I have planned so it will stand, For the LORD of hosts has planned, and who can frustrate it? And as for His stretched-out hand, who can turn it back?'"

Isa 46:9,10, "'Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure'; ..."

Jesus said, John 5:24,25, *"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life. Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead (spiritually dead in sin) will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live."*

Do you hear His voice? Jesus said in John 6:37, *"All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out."* Do you believe Jesus, that He can do and will do what He said He would do? Do you believe Jesus can forgive all your sins and take out your heart of stone you were born with and make you a child of God? Obey Him if you feel a drawing towards Him and truly believe He is the Son of God. Cry out to Him like the Tax Collector, *"But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be*

merciful to me, the sinner!" Jesus, the Son of God, God made man, is able and will do exactly as He said, for it is impossible for Him to lie!!!
Let's Pray!

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All the Scriptures I have shared with you are consistent, in agreement with one another and in total agreement with what our Lord Jesus Christ taught about God's gracious, merciful choice of His people, His sheep; and consistent with Old and New Testament teachings. The Scriptures were given to us that we might know Christ and be saved by Him, making us the Children of God, God's own possession. Since I don't have time to go through them all, I will list some here for you to read and pray over to see if all the things I have shared with you are consistent and true according to the whole of Scripture (Scripture agreeing with Scripture):

Matthew 1:21; Matthew 11:25-27; John 6:37-40 (39 God the Father gives to Jesus only those He chose before the creation and whose names He wrote in the Lambs book of life, Ephesians 1), 44-45 (44 God the Father has to draw those He chose to Christ or they cannot know Christ and will not come to Him of their own choosing), 63-65 (65 No one can come to Christ except God the Father grants it to them and reveals His Son to them for salvation); Matthew 16:13-17 (17 God the Father drew Peter to Christ and revealed Christ to Peter. Otherwise, Peter could have never come to Christ. Peter was one the Father chose and wrote his name in the book of life); John 10:14-16 (15 Jesus died for sheep only. He didn't die for the goats; 16 is speaking of all the Elect, Jew & Gentle, who have not yet come to faith at the time Jesus spoke these words), 24-30 (29 The Father gives to Jesus all those He chose before the foundation of the world, they are His sheep and they alone); John 17:4-6 (6 Jesus reveals the Father to only those the Father has given Him in keeping with Matthew 11:25-27. They are the ones His Father chose as His own possession - Ephesians 1), 9-21 (20 Jesus is praying for all the Elect after His suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven who come to faith through the Scriptures including the New Testament writings left by the disciples - "their word"); Romans 8:28-34 (33 the whole chapter 8 is about the Elect); II Timothy 2:8-10 [10 Paul suffered all that he suffered to get the gospel to the Elect, because he was confident that

the Father would draw His Chosen ones to His Son; and Jesus Christ His Son, being obedient to His Father, would regenerate and renew them through the workings of the Holy Spirit; birthing them into His Kingdom thereby making them His own possession. Paul knows God and understands Ephesians 1 - He wrote Ephesians 1 while he was with us on earth to lead the saints at Ephesus who were faithful in Christ to a greater understanding of God's very Person, that they would grow in intimacy with their Eternal triune God: God the Father, Jesus Christ His Son and God the Holy Spirit Who proceeds from both the Father and the Son!!! Listen to the Apostle's words as he speaks in verses 15-21, "For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints, do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. I pray that the eyes of your heart (that they would have these truths written in their hearts that they might have intimacy with the Living God and it wouldn't be just intellectual knowledge having little meaning) may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come."); I Peter 1:1-5 (1 & 2 Peter addresses the saints scattered as chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father; 3 God the Father gave mercy on His chosen causing them to be born again); II Peter 1:10 (Peter exhorts them to be diligent to make certain of God the Father's calling and choosing them); Revelation 20:11-15 (15 Only the Elect whose names were written in the Lambs book of life will escape God's judgments and being thrown into the Lake of Fire); Revelation 21:22-27 (27 Only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life will be in heaven.)